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THE USSR LABOR RESERVE SYSTEMHistory of the Labor Reserves System

The State Labor Reserves were established on 2 October 1940 by a law authorizing the Council of People's Commissars to draft annually 800,000-1,000,000 boys, 14-17 years old, for training as industrial workers.(1) The law was amended on 19 June 1947 to permit the draft of both boys and girls and to make certain changes in the draft ages.(2)

Mass training of workers for Soviet industry began in 1920 with the establishment of FZU (factory-plant apprenticeship) schools in the metal industry. By 1921, there were 43 such schools, with 2,000 pupils. The system spread to other fields of industry, and by 1923 there were 50,000 pupils in FZU schools; by 1926, 95,000. The period of greatest growth was between 1930 and 1932, when FZU schools had 1,700,000 pupils. During the First Five-Year Plan, FZU schools trained 450,000 workers for industry, while a goal of 2.5 million trained workers was set for the Second Five-Year Plan. A 15 September 1933 decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars resulted in some reorganization of the FZU system.(3)

The Presidium, Supreme Soviet USSR, issued a ukase on 2 October 1940, "Concerning State Labor Reserves of the USSR," establishing three separate types of labor reserve schools: trade (remeslennoye), railroad, and FZO (factory-plant training).(4)

After this reorganization of the labor reserve system, there were in 1940 in the USSR 622 trade, 122 railroad, and 860 FZO schools, with a total enrollment of over 600,000.(5)

Trade and FZO schools trained 2,250,000 workers between 1940 and 1945 including 600,000 for war plants, 310,000 for transport, 250,000 for metallurgy; 200,000 for industrial construction and the construction materials industry, 180,000 for the mining industry, 150,000 for machine building, 80,000 for power engineering, etc. In many plants, 30-70 percent of the personnel were trained in trade and FZO schools.(4)

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Special trade schools were organized after World War II for war orphans. In 1948 - 1949, the training of labor reserves for the coal and ore-mining industries was increased considerably through the establishment of mining industry schools as well as mine engineering schools with a 7-year course of instruction.(5)

The following table shows the number of skilled workers trained during each year of the Fourth Five-Year Plan (6):

	<u>1946</u>	<u>1947</u>	<u>1948</u>	<u>1949</u>	<u>1950</u>
No of workers trained in trade, RR, and FZO schools (thousands)	382	790	1,000	723	494
No of workers with individual, brigade, and course training, plus personnel trained on the job (millions)	5.9	5.4	6.1	6.6	7

Training in the Labor Reserve System

Under the 1940 labor reserves law, boys 14 to 15 years old were assigned to 2 years' training in trade and railroad schools, and those from 16 to 17 were assigned to 6 months' training in factory and plant schools for work in the coal, mining, metal, and construction industries. The 1947 amendment, which is still in effect, provides that boys 14 to 17 and girls 15 to 17 may be drafted for training in trade, railroad, and mining industry schools. Both boys and girls 15 to 16 may be drafted for FZO school training; boys up to 19 years of age may be drafted for training for underground work in the coal and mining industries as well as for training as smelters, foundrymen, welders, and drillers in the metallurgical and petroleum industries.

The two basic types of training in the labor reserve system are 2-year courses for training such skilled workers as turners, machinists, and locomotive engineers, and 6-month courses for training miners, carpenters, plasterers, etc. The stress is on practical job training, either in separate schools or in schools attached to factories and plants. The 2-year courses includes some work in such theoretical subjects as technology of metals, physics, chemistry, and mathematics.(7)

Four years of previous schooling are required of labor reserve draftees accepted for semiskilled training and 7 years for skilled training.

Training in labor reserve educational institutions is free, and trainees receive full maintenance from the state during the training period. They are provided with free meals, uniforms, and special clothing, as well as textbooks and school supplies. Out-of-town pupils and those from rural areas are provided with living quarters.

Trainees receive payment for work done by them in the process of training, and one month's vacation year. Upon completion of training, they are given a month's leave with pay, to be paid by the enterprise to which they have been assigned. If they are sent to work away from home, the enterprise also pays travel costs, baggage freight charge, and a travel allowance of 7.50 rubles per day.(8)

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Labor reserve trainees are required to work for 4 years in state factories, plants, mines, etc., to which they are assigned by the Ministry of Labor Reserves. There they are paid regular wages, according to the same scale as other workers. Labor reserve draftees are exempt from military service during their 4 years of compulsory labor service.(9)

A 28 December 1940 ukase of the Presidium, Supreme Soviet USSR, establishes a penalty of up to one year's confinement in a labor colony for leaving trade, railroad, and FZO schools without authorization, as well as for persistent and gross violation of school discipline resulting in expulsion.(10)

Drafting of Trainees

The number of trainees to be drafted from urban areas is determined by yearly quotas. In rural areas, two trainees are drafted for each 100 men and women between the ages of 14 and 55. Some 600,000 trainees were drafted in this manner from rural areas in November 1940, and again in June 1941.(11)

Soviet sources, however, insist that there is no compulsion to fill labor reserve quotas. It has even been claimed that there are more applicants than vacancies (12), and in June and October every year the Soviet press is filled with announcements of acceptance of application for enrollment in various trade and FZO schools. But newspaper articles on the labor reserve system continue to write of "quotas," "recruiting," and "recruiting commissions."

A recent press article reveals some of the problems involved in recruiting for the labor reserves. It describes the plight of one Vasily Trifonov, a young blacksmith at a kolkhoz in Sleptsovo, Zarayskiy Rayon, Moscow Oblast. In April 1949, Trifonov and several other young workers at the kolkhoz were recruited for FZO School No 4 in Stalinogorsk by the head of that school; their identification cards were taken from them and they were ordered to go to Stalinogorsk. Trifonov complied, but was called back when the kolkhoz decided he was indispensable; he returned, minus his identity card, to help with the spring plowing. A year later, in April 1950, the story continues, Trifonov was jailed by the Zarayskiy Rayon militia for being without identification papers, but was rescued by the rayon Komsomol committee. An investigation revealed that the FZO school had turned Trifonov's papers over to the public prosecutor of Donskoy Rayon (where the school is located) after his unauthorized departure from school. The case led to a wrangle between the public prosecutors of Donskoy and Zarayskiy rayons as to whether Trifonov ought to be prosecuted in the rayon where he resided or in the rayon where the "crime" was committed. The argument was still going on in January 1951, and Trifonov was still without his identity card.(13)

Another article complained that labor reserve officials were interfering with the realization of the new compulsory 7-year education law in Chelyabinsk Oblast. According to the oblast public education section, 850 pupils failed to finish the 1949 - 1950 school year because of their transfer to FZO schools.(14)

Shortcomings of the Labor Reserve System

The Soviet press continues to criticize the labor reserve system for reasons ranging from failure of recruiting commissions to recruit pupils on time, to failure of enterprises to make proper use of trade and FZO school graduates. Some of these criticisms are given below.

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In October 1949, recruiting commissions in the Karelo-Finnish SSR were criticized for "repeating past mistakes," continuing to lag behind schedule in both organization and calling up trainees for labor reserve schools.(15)

In Moscow and Moscow Oblast, labor reserve officials were cautioned that fulfillment of the 11,200-person quota could not be neglected, even though 1,020 applications had already been received. Officials were told to carry out recruitment in accordance with plans which take into consideration the manpower requirements and the availability of manpower in each rayon, and the number of collective farm youth who may be recruited to work in cities of Moscow Oblast.

Directors of enterprises and construction trusts in Moscow City and Oblast were criticized for making things "difficult" for FZO schools by refusing to accept graduates of the schools. One woodworking combine was not ready in time to accept 100 new FZO school graduates, with the result that the graduates were still occupying the school's dormitory and delaying the arrival of a new class.(16)

There were several complaints in the Kirgiz SSR press. One newspaper article ascribed the shortage of FZO school trainees to the failure of recruiting commissions to take their work seriously, and claimed that persons already trained in labor reserve schools were being sent to school a second time.(17)

Another article on the training of labor reserves in the Kirgiz SSR complained that in a great many FZO schools instruction was poorly organized. It charged that pupils do not receive adequate training and practical experience, and that some schools lacked qualified teachers and the necessary textbooks. Practical work was criticized as particularly deficient because of tool shortages and restricted access to workshops. The article noted a "considerable dropping out" of trainees from FZO schools, and a failure to freeze FZO school graduates in their jobs, with the result that large numbers were leaving the enterprises to which they were assigned and either going to other enterprises or returning to work on collective farms near their villages.(18)

At the Severnaya mine of the Task-Kumyr Trust, 61 of 80 mining industry school graduates were not working at their specialties; the same was true of some of the mines at the Sulyutka Trust.(5)

Statistics on the Labor Reserve System

In October 1950, the Soviet press, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the labor reserve system, published a mass of material ranging from announcements of enrollment to over-all work production figures of FZO trainees over the past 10 years. Some of this information, together with other material, is presented below.

USSR

V. Pronin is Minister of Labor Reserves USSR.(19)

Trade and FZO schools of the USSR are equipped with about 40,000 metal-cutting machine tools.(20)

In 1948 alone, workers trained in FZO schools mined 5 million tons of coal, produced 3,504 metal-cutting machine tools and 72.3 million rubles' worth of machine tools, mined 626,500 tons of iron ore, cast 94,700 tons of pig iron, and manufactured 132,800 tons of steel.(21)

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In the 10 years of the labor reserve system, young people in training in the course of their training alone: mined about 2 million tons of coal, 1.8 million tons of ore, and 27.6 million tons of petroleum; repaired about 2,000 steam locomotives and 17,000 railroad cars; produced more than 3,410,000 bricks and 16,104,000 rubles' worth of machine tools.(22)

RSFSR

Over 60,000 young specialists were trained in Moscow FZO schools between 1940 and 1949.(23) Moscow labor reserve schools trained 15,000 persons during 1950.(24) FZO, mining, trade, and railroad schools in Moscow City and Oblast trained 35,800 young workers during 1950.(25) In October 1949, Moscow City and Oblast FZO schools sent almost 6,000 young construction workers to industrial enterprises.(16)

Some 4,420 new trainees were enrolled in Moscow's 29 FZO schools for the 1949 - 1950 school year.(26) About 8,000 boys and girls were to enter Moscow trade and railroad schools for the 1950 - 1951 school year.(27)

ARMENIAN SSR

The labor reserve system in Soviet Armenia has trained over 20,000 highly qualified workers since 1940. The republic now has nine trade schools, one special trade school, one railroad school, and four FZO schools.(28)

AZERBAIDZHAN SSR

Azerbaijdzhan FZO schools for petroleum and construction workers train male volunteers, 16 - 19 years old. The period of instruction in these schools is 6 months to one year.(29)

BELORUSSIAN SSR

There were 23 trade and railroad schools and over 60 FZO schools in the Belorussian SSR in 1940; by 1947 the number of trainees in labor reserve educational institutions exceeded the prewar number. In many trade schools, trainees achieved a cutting speed of 400 meters a minute on modernized machine tools; there are now 884 machine tools in use in FZO schools of the republic.

In addition to its regular trade and FZO schools, the labor reserve system in the Belorussian SSR has one agricultural and six special trade schools for war orphans.

M. Khasin is chief of the Belorussian SSR Administration of the Ministry of Labor Reserves.(30)

GEORGIAN SSR

About 900 new pupils were to enter trade and railroad schools in Tbilisi for the 1950 - 1951 school year.(31)

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KARELO-FINNISH SSR

In 1949, tractor operators, drivers, and electric saw engine mechanics for lumbering enterprises were given training in republic FZO schools for the first time. FZO School No 15 was set up at the shipyard of the Belomorsk-
Onega Ship Line in Belomorsk; in addition to shipbuilders it will train riveter-caulkers and ship's firemen. FZO School No 3 at the Petrozavodsk House-Construction Combine has been reorganized into a school with a 10-month course of instruction.

G. Stepanov is head of the Karelo-Finnish SSR Administration of the Ministry of Labor Reserves.(15)

KAZAKH SSR

A new industrial tekhnikum under the Ministry of Labor Reserves was to be opened in Karaganda in January 1951; 100 young miners were enrolled.(32)

KIRGIZ SSR

FZO construction schools under the Ministry of Communal Economy Kirgiz SSR train boys and girls, 16 to 19, with 4 years of previous education, as bricklayers, concrete workers, installation men, plasterers, carpenters, and painters. The course of instruction is 6 months; trainees receive a stipend of 1,950 rubles a month, are provided free living quarters, and are paid for on-the-job training.(33)

FZO and mining industry schools under the Kirgiz SSR Administration of the Ministry of Labor Reserves offer training in the following trades:

1. Mining Industry School No 3, for coal miners, Kyzyl-Kiya, Osh Oblast
2. Mining Industry School No 4, for coal miners and mine builders, Kok-
Yangak, Dzhahalal-Abad Oblast
3. FZO School No 9, for construction workers, Ak-Tyuz, Frunze Oblast
4. FZO School No 28, for tractor operators, Przheval'sk, Issyk-Kul'
Oblast

The course of instruction is 6 months; boys 16 to 17, with 4 years of previous schooling, are eligible. Further information may be obtained from the Administration of Labor Reserves, Frunze, ulitsa Pervomayskaya, 59.(34)

LATVIAN SSR

Over 78 trades and specialties are taught trainees in the labor reserve schools of the Latvian SSR; there are, in addition, six special trade schools for war orphans, with 3- to 4-year courses of instruction, in which over 1,400 trainees are enrolled. There are two art trade schools, also with 3- to 4-year courses; the Riga school, which has 200 pupils, trains workers for architecture and the arts. FZO construction schools have a 10-month course.

In 1949 alone, trade schools received 105 new machine tools; during the past few years these schools produced 196 machine tools, including 130 T-4 screw-cutting lathes. Fifty screw-cutting machine tools are manufactured each year by trainees of Trade School No 1, who also produce spare parts for these machine tools and about 40 types of fitters' tools.

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1. Trinkler is head of the Latvian SSR Administration of the Ministry of Labor Reserves.(35)

The Ministry of Labor Reserves operates 22 schools in Latvia.(36)

There is an FZO school at the Riga Meat Combine, ulitsa Atlasa, 5.(37)

MOLDAVIAN SSR

The Moldavian SSR has nine labor reserve educational institutions, teaching 20 specialties.(38)

TADZHIK SSR

The Tadzhik SSR Administration of the Ministry of Labor Reserves operates the following schools: (1) Trade School No 2, Leninabad; (2) Trade School No 4, "Kim" Petroleum Field, Leninabad Oblast; (3) Trade School No 5, Kurgan-Tyube; (4) Trade School No 6, Stalinabad, ulitsa Krasnykh Partizan, 29; (5) Special Trade School No 3 (boys), Stalinabad, Lermontova, 4; (6) Special Trade School No 8 (girls), Stalinabad, Trudyeva, 36; (7) Railroad School No 1, Stalinabad, Lenina, 14.

The railroad school and trade schools of the Tadzhik SSR train boys, 15 to 16, with 4 years of previous schooling. Special trade schools accept war orphans, 14 to 16, with 4 years of previous schooling. The railroad school also accepts boys, 17 years of age, for a one-year course of training as locomotive engineer's assistants and track foremen. The regular course of instruction in trade and railroad schools is 2 years, and in special trade schools, 3-4 years.(39)

UZBEK SSR

The FZO school at the Tashkent Milling Combine No 2, Sel'mashskiy proyezd, 9, and the "Glavmuka" FZO school train boys and girls, 15 to 18, with 6-7 years of previous education, in one-year courses.(40)

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27. Moscow, Moskovskaya Pravda, 23 Jun 50
28. Yerevan, Kommunist, 3 Oct 50
29. Baku, Bakinskiy Rabochiy, 23 Oct 49
30. Minsk, Sovetskaya Belorussiya, 3 Oct 50
31. Tbilisi, Zarya Vostoka, 22 Sep 50
32. Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, 9 Dec 50
33. Sovetskaya Kirgiziya, 23 Oct 49
34. Sovetskaya Kirgiziya, 20 Oct 50
35. Riga, Sovetskaya Latvija, 3 Oct 50
36. Sovetskaya Latvija, 31 Jan 51

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39. Kommunist Tadzhikistana, 20 Jun 50
40. Tashkent, Pravda Vostoka, 24 Jun 50

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